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CANADA

Little Children Sav- iours of the World

(A young Jewish girl attends a colored church in Texas and writes of her reactions to this experience.)

by Fania Kruker

I strolled one Easter Sunday evening across the tracks of a small Texas town when the sad chanting of Negro voices came from a little church on the hill: "Come to Jesus" . . . What strange potency urged me, a Jewess, to enter the church? I hesitated at the entrance. One white among so many dark faces made my heart timid . . . I wanted to slip away, to go back. . . . Seeing my reluctance, an elder of the church, with a white beard, white hair, and light-brown skin came forward to escort me down the aisle to the front seat. The little boys with eyes sparkling who sang the rest "Come to Jesus," stopped their song when the elder ordered them to move out that I might have the whole bench to myself. Sitting alone on the long wide bench, I felt terribly cramped.

For a moment there was a hush in the church. The two little boys, having moved to a chair near the window, sat humped and silent, and looking at me with curious eyes. Unconsciously I put my hand out and beckoned them to return and sit by me. There was no response. Only hurt was in their eyes. I saw another child not far away. His tJyo brown little hands were clutching his mother's red dress and his little head snuggled against her breast. The mother instinct stirred in me. The mother in me wanted to hug the baby in the two year old but he too looked strangely at me.

I was glad when the choir struck up again: "Come to Jesus . . . Come to Jesus" . . . hm . . . hm . . . And the hm . . . hm . . . hm . . . slowly died away. I waited for the next note but instead the minister began reading the Scriptures. "O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes . . ." "Amen." . . . "Hallelujah" "That's so" rose from all over the place; from the old man with the white beard and white hair and light brown skin, from the younger ones and from the children. The harsh whistling of a train struck a discordant note in the harmony of sounds . . . "And hast revealed them into babes," I unconsciously repeated, and turned to glance at the two little boys whose song I had silenced.

"Come to Jesus," was again sung at the end of the services. And the hm hm . . . hm . . . that followed slowly died away. And I did not listen for another note. I sat there ashamed and grieved. I had heard not the voices of the choir but the passion of a people, the pain of the Negro race, souls that had endured through generations—bondaged souls . . . And there rose from the background of these people the struggles of the Jews. And I, a Jewess, could feel our kindred miseries from our kindred hurts. My mind travelled swiftly far beyond the little Negro church, beyond the sea, to Czarist Russia . . . the home of

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